

**QA-625**  
**Perfect Garment Company**  
**4611 Main Street**  
**Grasonville**  
**Queen Anne's County**

**Constructed ca. 1930**  
**Private**

The Perfect Garment Company is located on the north side of Main Street (MD Route 18) in Grasonville, in Queen Anne's County; it stands within the Grasonville Survey District (QA-611). The circa 1930 building is a one-story, five-bay, front-gable, frame factory building. A one-story, frame, gable-roofed loading dock is attached to the rear (north elevation) of the factory.

Circa 1914, Benjamin F. Miller established a shirt factory in Grasonville that ultimately became the Perfect Garment Company. The factory was one of many such clothing factories that were established on the Eastern Shore in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Prior to World War II, the shirt factory in Grasonville primarily employed young, unmarried, white women; after World War II, it began employing married white women as well. Architectural and documentary evidence indicates that the Perfect Garment Company building was constructed between 1926 and 1935 to house the factory operations. With its length, relatively unadorned exterior, and repetitive design elements, the Perfect Garment Company building is a recognizably institutional or light-industrial structure. Features such as the rear loading dock further emphasize the building's historic use as a factory. The Perfect Garment Company is one of only a few remaining examples of early twentieth-century industrial architecture in Queen Anne's County.

# Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. QA-625

**1. Name of Property** (indicate preferred name)

historic                      Perfect Garment Company (preferred)

other Grasonville Flag Shop (current)

## 2. Location

street and number 4611 Main Street \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Grasonville, MD 21638-1222 \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity

county                      Queen Anne's County

**3. Owner of Property** (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name	Milford A. Orndorff Revocable Trust, Milford A. & Patricia L. Orndorff, Trustees
------	--

street and number	906 Chester River Drive	telephone
-------------------	-------------------------	-----------

city, town	Grasonville	state	MD	zip code	21638-1005
------------	-------------	-------	----	----------	------------

#### 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.	Queen Anne's County Courthouse	liber	SM 1546	folio	597
-------------------------------------	--------------------------------	-------	---------	-------	-----

city, town	Centreville	tax map	58A	tax parcel	31	tax ID number	05-015650
------------	-------------	---------	-----	------------	----	---------------	-----------

## 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District  
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District  
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER  
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT  
☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. Classification

[illegible]

## 7. Description

Inventory No. QA-625

### Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

### Summary

The Perfect Garment Company is located on the north side of Main Street (MD Route 18) in Grasonville, in Queen Anne's County; it stands within the Grasonville Survey District (QA-611). The circa 1930 building is a one-story, five-bay, front-gable, frame factory building. A one-story, frame, gable-roofed loading dock is attached to the rear (north elevation) of the factory.

### Description

The Perfect Garment Company is located in Grasonville, in Queen Anne's County. Facing south towards Main Street (MD Route 18), the one-story, frame building is situated on a level, .30-acre lot that is more or less in the middle of town. A deep drainage ditch and a small grassy area border the building on the west side of the property. A gravel drive and parking lot stand between the building and 4701 Main Street to the east. The property backs onto residential lots.

The circa 1940 Perfect Garment Company building is a one-story, five-bay, frame factory building that rests upon a cinder block foundation. The building is clad with aluminum weatherboards, although historic photographs show it clad with wood shingles. Open eaves with an unadorned, wood fascia demarcate the roofline. The front-gable roof is sheathed with asphalt shingles. A tall, interior, brick chimney with a corbelled cap is situated on the western slope of the roof, near the façade (south elevation). An interior, parged, brick, flue chimney straddles the roof ridge line near the rear of the building. A one-story, frame, gable-roofed loading dock is attached to the rear (north elevation) of the factory.

The Perfect Garment Company's five-bay, symmetrically organized façade (south elevation) features a centered, replacement, glass door with two, six-over-six, double-hung, wood windows on either side. Both the windows and the doorway are framed by square-edged, wood surrounds that are consistent on all of the building's elevations. A shed-roofed hood shelters the front entry; its sides are clad with plywood, and it is supported by wood brackets. A rectangular, louvered, wood vent occupies the front gable. Three large, rectangular sheets of plywood cover a portion of the siding immediately below the vent.

The east and west elevations of the factory are nine bays long and contain windows matching those found on the façade. On the west elevation, the third and fourth windows back from the façade have been boarded over. The east elevation displays a centered, boarded-up doorway with four window bays on either side.

The Perfect Garment Company's rear (north) elevation contains four irregularly spaced bays, the westernmost of which is located within the loading dock area. The two easternmost window openings have been boarded shut. Against the western edge of the interior of those two windows is another opening – also boarded shut – that may have been a hatch into the building. The fourth opening is a doorway into the factory building from the loading dock; it is occupied by a replacement, flush wood door. A wood louver that matches the one on the façade is located in the gable.

The rear loading dock is a one-story structure that appears to be an addition; it seems likely, however, that it was added within a few years of the original construction. It is attached to the western half of the factory's north elevation. The loading dock rests upon concrete-block piers. Two-thirds of its eastern elevation is open to allow vehicle access, while the rest of the structure is clad with wood shingles. Its gable roof is sheathed with corrugated metal.

## 8. Significance

Inventory No. QA-625

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history	
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/	<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____	

Specific dates

Architect/Builder

Construction dates ca. 1930

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

### Summary Statement of Significance

Circa 1914, Benjamin F. Miller established a shirt factory in Grasonville that ultimately became the Perfect Garment Company. The factory was one of many such clothing factories that were established on the Eastern Shore in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Prior to World War II, the shirt factory in Grasonville primarily employed young, unmarried, white women; after World War II, it began employing married white women as well. Architectural and documentary evidence indicates that the Perfect Garment Company building was constructed between 1926 and 1935 to house the factory operations. With its length, relatively unadorned exterior, and repetitive design elements, the Perfect Garment Company building is a recognizably institutional or light-industrial structure. Features such as the rear loading dock further emphasize the building's historic use as a factory. The Perfect Garment Company is one of only a few remaining examples of early twentieth-century industrial architecture in Queen Anne's County.

### Historical Narrative

Circa 1914, Benjamin F. Miller established a shirt factory in Grasonville that ultimately became the Perfect Garment Company.<sup>1</sup> In 1910, Miller was working as a railroad laborer in Baltimore, which was a leading center for the manufacture of men's clothing from the mid-nineteenth century through the 1930s. Miller may have established connections with people in the clothing industry while living in the city; he boarded with a shipping clerk in a shirt factory, and several young women in neighboring houses worked as seamstresses in shirt factories.<sup>2</sup>

From the 1880s through the 1930s, the clothing industry was the largest manufacturing employer in Baltimore and in the state of Maryland as a whole.<sup>3</sup> The Maryland clothing industry specialized in ready-to-wear men's clothing, and most of the factories were devoted to sewing garments together to produce the finished garment. By the late nineteenth century, many clothing manufacturers in Baltimore sub-contracted jobs to smaller contractors. In order to maximize profits, contractors often sought to minimize labor costs. In Baltimore and other major cities, the contract system encouraged the establishment of sweatshops, where employees – usually women and children – worked long hours in miserable conditions for little pay.<sup>4</sup> By the turn of the twentieth century, several

<sup>1</sup> Catherine A. Bishop, "Grasonville," typescript (Queen Anne's County, MD: n.p. [ca. 1935-1940]). The essay is undated, but the topics of discussion and the bibliography indicate that it was likely written in 1935. The date when the factory was founded could not be verified in existing primary sources. However, it was certainly operating by 1920; the population census for that year describes Benjamin F. Miller as the owner of a shirt factory, and lists several young Grasonville women as seamstresses in a shirt factory. See 1920 U.S. Population Census, Queen Anne's County, Maryland, District No. 5 (Queenstown), Winchester Village, Enumeration District No. 132, Sheet Nos. 2B and 5A.

<sup>2</sup> 1910 U.S. Population Census, Baltimore City, Maryland, 24<sup>th</sup> Ward, Enumeration District No. 402, Page No. 206.

<sup>3</sup> Benjamin Latrobe, Jr. Chapter of the Society for Industrial Archeology, *Baltimore: Industrial Gateway on the Chesapeake* (Baltimore: Baltimore Museum of Industry, 1995), p. 40; Robert J. Brugger, *Maryland: A Middle Temperament, 1634-1980* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), pp. 315-316.

<sup>4</sup> Brugger, pp. 350-351.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. QA-625

- Ancestry.com. *Denton Journal* (Denton, Maryland) [database on-line]. Provo, UT: The Generations Network, Inc., 2006. Accessed 13 December 2007. <<http://content.ancestry.com/iexec/?htx=Newspaper&dbid=6686&offerid=0%3a7858%3a0>>.
- Benjamin Latrobe, Jr. Chapter of the Society for Industrial Archeology. *Baltimore: Industrial Gateway on the Chesapeake*. Baltimore: Baltimore Museum of Industry, 1995.
- Bishop, Catherine A. "Grasonville." Typescript. Queen Anne's County, MD: n.p., [ca. 1935].
- Brugger, Robert J. *Maryland: A Middle Temperament, 1643-1980*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988.
- Clark, Charles B. *The Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia*. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., 1950.
- Fellows, Helfenbein, and Newnam Funeral Home, P.A. Obituaries [database on-line]. Accessed 13 December 2007. <<http://www.fhnfuneralhome.com>>.
- McKnight, Paul. Ed., *'I Remember When...': Folk history [sic] of Queen Anne's County*. Queen Anne's County, MD: Queen Anne's County Record Observer/Kent Island Bay Times, 1985.
- U.S. Population Census, Baltimore City, Maryland, 1910.
- U.S. Population Census, Queen Anne's County, Maryland, 1920 and 1930.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property .30 acres

Acreage of historical setting .30 acres

Quadrangle name Queenstown Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000 (7.5 minute)

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The property boundary is defined by the current parcel boundaries shown on tax map 58A, grid 22, parcel 31 in Queen Anne's County, Maryland.

## 11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Evelyn D. Causey, Ph.D., Senior Historian, and Gerald M. Maready, Jr., Architectural Historian		
organization	History Matters, LLC	date	December 21, 2007
street & number	1502 21 <sup>st</sup> Street, NW, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor	telephone	(202) 223-8845
city or town	Washington	state	DC

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to:

Maryland Historical Trust  
Maryland Department of Planning  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
410-514-7600



# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. QA-625

Name: Perfect Garment Company  
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 1

entrepreneurs had established shirt factories on the Eastern Shore, likely lured by the prospect of cheap labor and low housing prices.<sup>5</sup> Like most Eastern Shore shirt factories, Miller's Grasonville factory probably depended on contracts with large clothing manufacturers or other suppliers.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most shirt factories in the United States primarily employed young white women, and Miller's Grasonville factory was no exception. This pattern of employing young women in textile and clothing factories dates back to the earliest days of the textile industry in the United States. Throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century, it was legal to pay women less for their labor, even if they performed the same work as men.<sup>6</sup>

In keeping with national patterns, in the early twentieth century, most of the seamstresses working in Miller's shirt factory in Grasonville were young, unmarried, white women who were not heads of household.<sup>7</sup> Of the ten women identified as seamstresses at the shirt factory in the 1930 population census, nine were single females between the ages of fourteen and thirty-two; most were between the ages of seventeen and twenty-one. A fifty-four-year-old widow who lived with her daughter and son-in-law also worked as a seamstress in the factory. None of the seamstresses were heads of household, and most lived with their parents. The only factory employee who was a head of household was Maggie Lawrence, a forty-six year-old divorcee who supported herself and her 93-year-old mother; Lawrence was also the only employee located in the census who was working as a trimmer rather than a seamstress.<sup>8</sup>

Initially, Miller's shirt factory in Grasonville was located in the building at 4817-4819 Main Street, which is residential in form.<sup>9</sup> In 1926, Benjamin Miller and his wife, Daisy Miller, purchased the property at 4611 Main Street, which included a frame dwelling house.<sup>10</sup> Construction materials such as the cinder block foundation, and stylistic details such as the overhanging eaves, exposed rafter tails, and square-edged window surrounds support a construction date sometime in the 1930s. A circa 1935 photograph of the building indicates that its form and fenestration have changed little since that time. This photograph and one from the late 1940s depict the building with wood shingles rather than the vinyl siding that currently sheathes the exterior walls.<sup>11</sup> With its length, relatively unadorned exterior, and repetitive design elements, the Perfect Garment Company building is a recognizably institutional or light-industrial structure. Features such as a rear loading dock further emphasize the building's industrial use.

In the mid-1930s, approximately sixty women worked in the shirt factory at 4611 Main Street in Grasonville. At that time, the workers were making nurses' uniforms and women's aprons. Because of restrictions imposed by the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933 – a New Deal program that set wages and production quotas – the employees received twelve dollars a week for working thirty-six hours.<sup>12</sup>

In 1940, Edmund Sobelman and Elliott Menaker, both of Baltimore and trading as the Perfect Garment Company, purchased the property. However, Benjamin F. Miller appears in a late 1940s photograph of the factory's employees, and local residents

<sup>5</sup> An online search of the *Denton Journal* (published in Denton, Maryland) revealed that shirt factories were being established on the Eastern Shore by the early 1890s; the database begins in 1870. See Ancestry.com, *Denton Journal* (Denton, Maryland) [database on-line] (Provo, UT: The Generations Network, Inc., 2006), accessed 13 December 2007, <<http://content.ancestry.com/iexec/?htx=Newspaper&dbid=6686&offerid=0%3a7858%3a0>>.

<sup>6</sup> This was true until the passage of the Equal Pay Act of 1963, which amended the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to abolish wage differentials based on sex.

<sup>7</sup> Bishop, n.p.

<sup>8</sup> 1930 U.S. Population Census, Queen Anne's County, Maryland, District No. 5 (Queenstown), Grasonville, Enumeration District 18-10, Sheet Nos. 17A-19B.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Rhodes, personal interview, 17 July 2007.

<sup>10</sup> For this and all subsequent deed references, see attached Chain of Title (Section 8, Continuation Sheet 3).

<sup>11</sup> Bishop, n.p.; Paul McKnight, ed., *'I Remember When...': Folk history [sic] of Queen Anne's County* (Queen Anne's County, MD: Queen Anne's County Record Observer/Kent Island Bay Times, 1985), p. 46.

<sup>12</sup> Bishop, n.p.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. QA-625

Name: Perfect Garment Company  
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 2

---

remembered him as the owner of the company at that time. By 1945, the factory employed married white women as well as single white women.<sup>13</sup>

In 1940, 2,742 Eastern Shore residents worked in clothing factories; of these, 2,517 were women. However, the clothing factories in Queen Anne's County represented only a small part of the Eastern Shore clothing industry, which was concentrated in the southern counties of the Eastern Shore. In 1947, only two clothing factories were located in Queen Anne's County; Wicomico County, on the other hand, was home to nineteen clothing factories, and Dorchester County had eight factories.<sup>14</sup> While the clothing industry in Queen Anne's County played a significant role in the economic life of individual communities such as Grasonville, it had relatively little impact on the county's economy, which was dominated by agriculture and the maritime industries.

In November 1979, Milford A. and Patricia L. Orndorff purchased the property from the Perfect Garment Company. The factory closed in 1980, reflecting a nationwide decline in the clothing and textile industries in the United States.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> See obituaries for Catherine Mae Walls, *Fellows, Helfenbein, and Newnam Funeral Home, P.A.*, accessed 13 December 2007, <<http://www.fhnfuneralhome.com/obitdetails.php?ID=3424>>; and Mary Theresa Bradley, *Fellows, Helfenbein, and Newnam Funeral Home, P.A.*, accessed 13 December 2007, <<http://www.fhnfuneralhome.com/obitdetails.php?ID=4907>>.

<sup>14</sup> Charles B. Clark, *The Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., 1950), pp. 857-858, 867-868.

<sup>15</sup> Obituary for Mary Theresa Bradley, *Fellows, Helfenbein, and Newnam Funeral Home, P.A.*, accessed 13 December 2007, <<http://www.fhnfuneralhome.com/obitdetails.php?ID=4907>>.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. QA-625

Name: Perfect Garment Company  
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 3

---

### Chain of Title

#### **11 March 2006**

Milford A. Orndorff to Milford A. Orndorff Revocable Trust, Milford A. & Patricia L. Orndorff, Trustees  
Liber SM 1546, folio 597  
“... being the lot or parcel of ground upon which the Shirt Factory now stands.”  
.30303 acres

#### **15 October 1996**

Milford A. & Patricia L. Orndorff to Milford A. Orndorff  
Liber SM 548, folio 879  
.30303 acres

#### **20 November 1979**

Perfect Garment Co., Inc., to Milford A. & Patricia L. Orndorff  
Liber MWM 157, folio 558  
.30303 acres

#### **9 November 1979**

Edmund Sobelman, sole surviving partner, T/A The Perfect Garment Company to Perfect Garment Co., Inc.  
Liber MWM 157, folio 555

#### **3 December 1940**

Benjamin F. & Daisy M. Miller to Edmund Sobelman & Elliott Menaker, T/A The Perfect Garment Company  
Liber ASG, Jr. 3, folio 476  
.30303 acres

#### **3 June 1926**

Joseph & Lizzie E. Buckel to Benjamin F. & Daisy M. Miller  
Liber BHT 5, folio 299  
“... improved by frame dwelling house and outbuildings . . .”  
1.963 acres

#### **29 March 1924**

Eugene L. Dudley to Joseph & Lizzie E. Buckel  
Liber BHT 1, folio 427  
“... improved by frame dwelling house and outbuildings . . .”  
1.963 acres

#### **8 March 1924**

Amanda A. Cook to Eugene L. Dudley  
Liber BHT 1, folio 371  
“... improved by frame dwelling house and outbuildings . . .”  
1.963 acres



# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. QA-625

Name: Perfect Garment Company  
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 4

---

### 10 December 1923

William Elmer & Genevieve Tarr to Amanda A. Cook

Liber BHT 1, folio 91

"... improved by frame dwelling house and outbuildings ..."

"... part of a tract ..."

### 10 February 1910

John H. Tarr to William Elmer Tarr, with a life interest for Margaret Tarr

Will Book Liber RHT 1, folio 308

### 27 December 1873

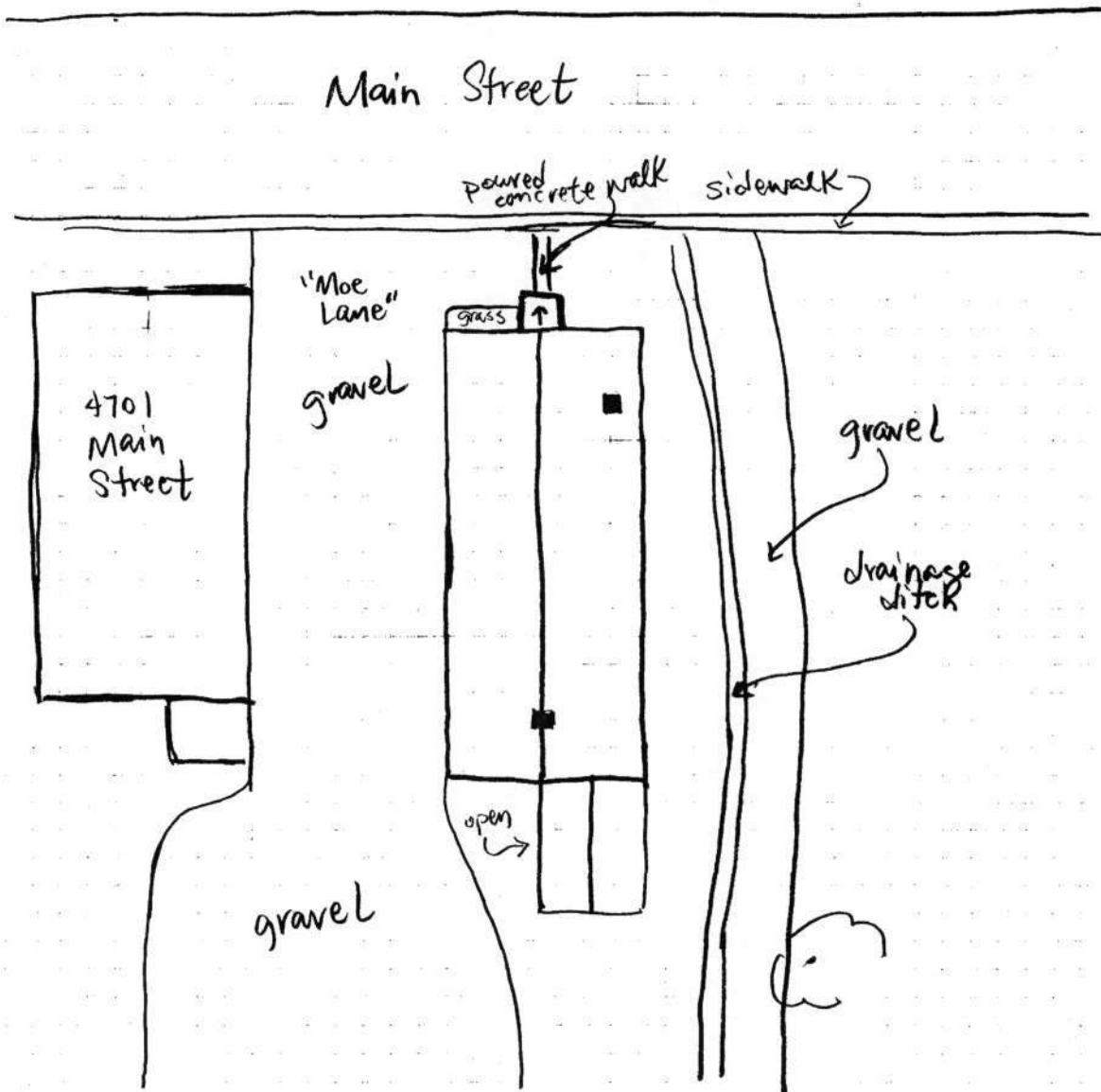
Margaret J. & Bennett E. Evans to John H. Tarr

Liber JW 4, folio 331

"all that lot or parcel of ground situated in Piney Creek ..."

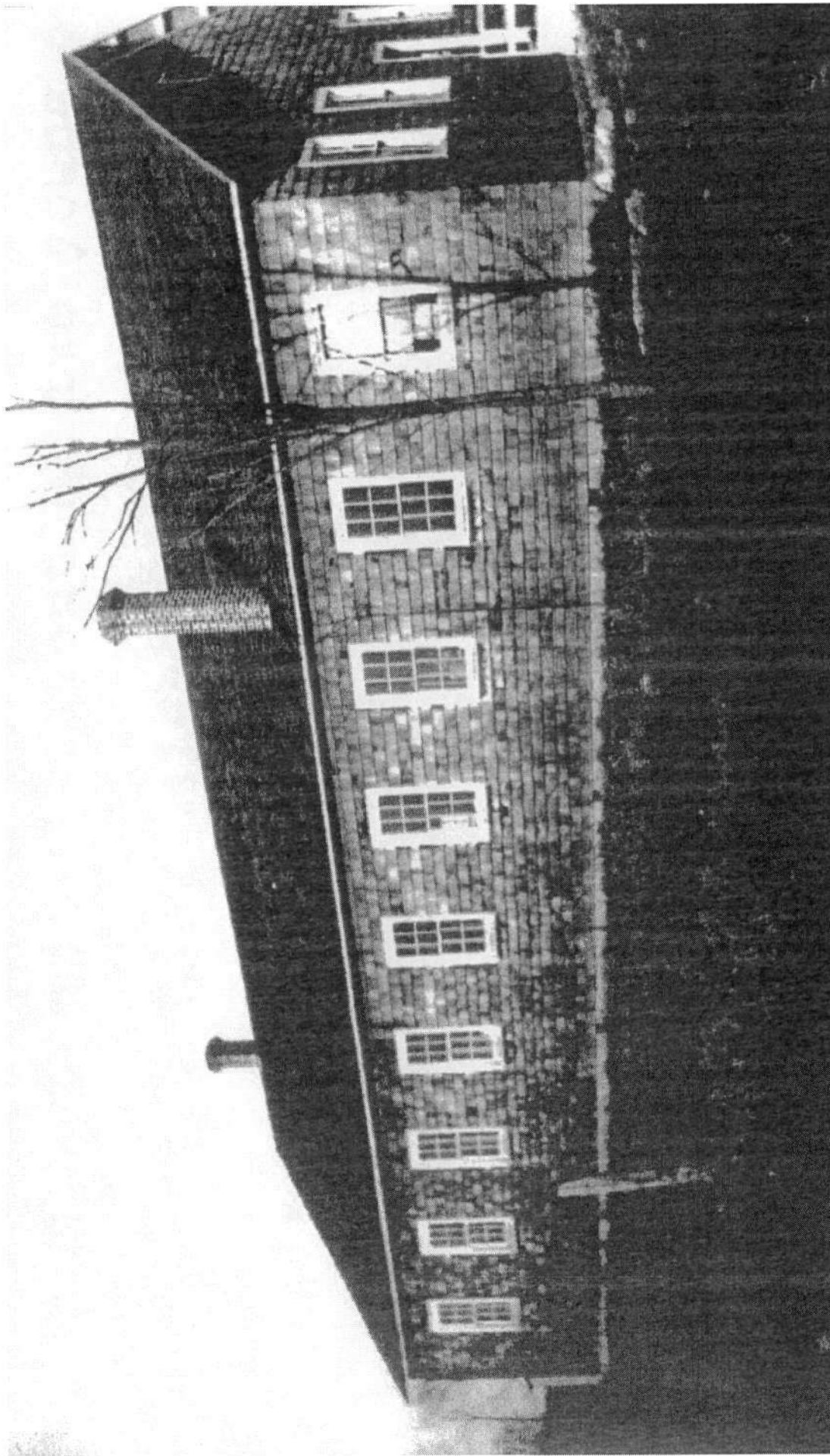
3 acres

Site Plan  
QA-625  
Perfect Garment Company  
4611 Main Street  
Grasonville  
Queen Anne's County, Maryland



not to scale

QA-625



ca. 1935 photograph of the exterior of The Perfect Garment Company (QA-625), Grasonville, Queen Anne's County, MD.  
[Catherine A. Bishop, "Grasonville," typescript, (Queen Anne's County, MD, [ca. 1935?], n. p.).]

# Portrait of the 'Perfect Garment Company'



This photo was found in the Perfect Garment Company building by M. A. Orndorff when he purchased it in 1979 and started what is now "The Grasonville Furniture Outlet." area residents helped identify the date (late 1940s) and the ladies in the photo and the garment firm's owner Benjamin Miller (standing with manager Catherine Burkett). First row: Mina Rhodes, Margaret Coleman, Virginia Sadler, Elizabeth Horney, Agnes

Chance, Anna Mae Jones, Valley Pentz, Ms. Vovak, Thelma Thomas and Elizabeth Jones.

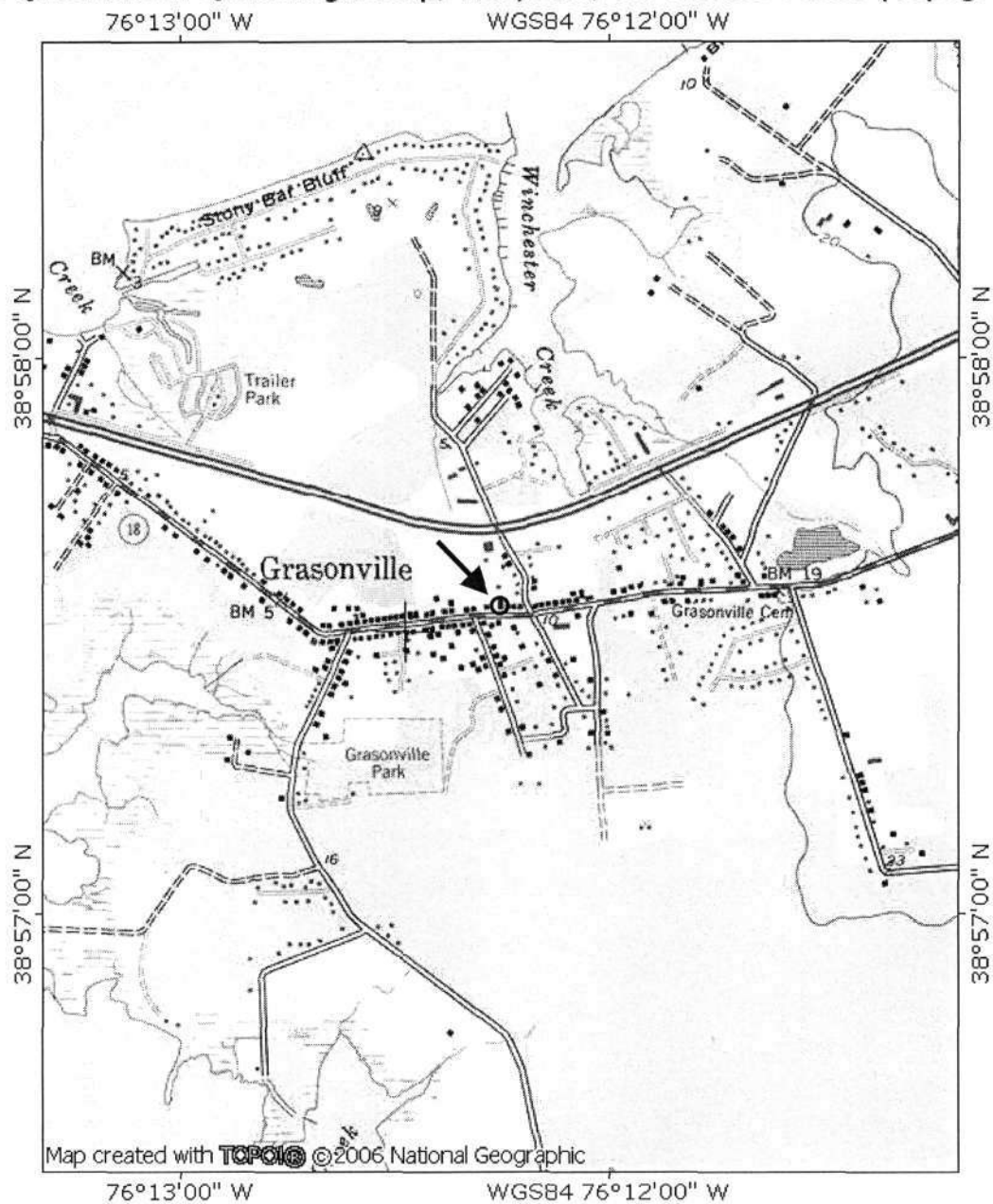
Second row: Elizabeth Hoxter, Alice Seltzer, Ida Huttie, Grethel Beecher, Nadaline Horney, Elizabeth Miller, Mary Baker Ireland, Ida Fromm, Louise Jones, Eunice Pierson, Alice Coleman and Elizabeth Timms. Photo courtesy P. L. Orndorff.

**Late-1940s photograph of employees of The Perfect Garment Company (QA-625), Grasonville, Queen Anne's County, MD.**

[Paul McKnight, ed., 'I Remember When...': Folk history [sic] of Queen Anne's County (Queen Anne's County, MD: Queen Anne's County Record Observer/Kent Island Bay Times, 1985) 46.]

QA-625

USGS Queenstown Quadrangle Map, Maryland, 7.5 Minute Series (Topographic)



**QA-625**  
**Perfect Garment Company**  
**4611 Main Street**  
**Grasonville**  
**Queen Anne's County**

0.0 0.5 1.0 miles  
 0.0 0.5 1.0 1.5 km

MN ↑ T  
 11½°  
 08/30/07







QA-625

Perfect Garment Company

41611 Main Street, Grasonville

Queen Anne's County, MD

History Matters, LLC

8/2007

MD SHPO

South + East Elevations, Looking NW

1 of 3



QA-625

Perfect Garment Company  
4611 Main Street, Grasonville  
Queen Anne's County, MD  
History Matters, LLC  
8/2007

MD SHPO  
West & South (facade) Elevations, Looking NE

2 of 3



QA-625

Perfect Garment Company  
4611 Main Street, Grasonville

Queen Anne's County, MD

History Matters LLC

8/2007

MD SHPO

East + North Elevations with rear loading dock, looking SW

3 of 3